

think it shows rather a sweet and modest disposition
pretend to be bad. Besides, there is this to be
be srJd. If you pretend to be ^ood, the world takes you
very seriously.
If you pret. nd to be ba-i, it doesn't. Such is the
astounding;
stupidity of ^ptimism.
Lady TjV/r^fr;/rJ»-e. Derrt you 'jcani the wor: 1 to
take you
serivjsly then., Lord Darlington?
Lord Darlington. No, not the world. Who are
the people
the world takes seriously? All the dull p'.opk-
one can think
of, from the Bishops down to the bores. 1
should like you
to take me very seriously. Lady Winderrr.'jre;^:.*
more than
any one else in life.
Lady Windermere. Why—why me?
Lord Darlington. [Afier a .rY;vV l:esitetion?± Because I
*.iink ws
might be grt-at friends. Let us be grea.t
friea.is. Vou may
want a friend ?o:ne oay.
Lady Wh:dryr;er^. Why fl-j yr*: say th::t?
Lord Darlington. Ch!—we all vrunt frier: j? at
tims.
Lady Windermere. I think we're very good fri&n.is
j..lr?o..i>%
Lord Darlington. We can always remain so as
long as you
don't---
Lord Darlington. Don't what?
Lady Windermere. Don't spoil it by saying
extravagant silly
things to me. You think I am. a Puritan, I
suppose? Well,
I have something of the Puritan in me. I was
brought up
like that. I am glad of it. My mother died
when I was a
mere child. I lived always with Lady Julia, rny
father's
elder sister, you know. She was stern to me, but
she taught
me what the world is forgetting, the difference
that there is
between what is right and what is wrong. *She*
allowed of
no compromise. *I* allow of none.
Lord Darlington. My dear Lady Windermere!
Lady Windermere. [Leaning back on the sofa."] You
look on me
as being behind the age—well, I am! I should
be sorry to
be on the same level as an age like this.
Lord Darlington. You think the age very bad.
Lady Windermere. Yes. Nowadays people seem
to look on
life as a speculation. It is not a speculation.
It is a
sacrament. Its ideal is Love. Its purification is
sacrifice.
Lord Darlington. [Smiling.] Oh, anything is better
than being
sacrificed!
Lady Windermere. [Leaning forward^ Don't say
that.
Lord Darlington. 1 do say it. I feel it—I know
it.